

If You're Struggling to Trust God in Your Trial, Read This

Recently I went on a walk through a beautiful park. It was almost a spring day ... chilly, but still warm enough to skip the jacket. The trees were still bare, the flowers still asleep, and the air still a little crisp.

At one point, there was an overlook which provided a lovely view of the marsh and the river in the distance. The contrast between the tall yellow grass of the marsh and the beautiful blue of the water beyond was stunning.

I loved the view.

But when I glanced down, I found that the view close up was rather unappealing. It was muddy, dirty looking water full of branches and old, wet grass.

And it struck me that from this one vantage point there were two decidedly different views. And how, in my life, there are definitely two views offered ... two views ahead of me.

I can look at what is right before me and the view is kind of disappointing, definitely a bit muddy, and far from the view I was hoping to have. While taking in the scenery of this view, I can only see the situations I find myself in—the difficulties, challenges, and disappointments. I don't seem able to see beyond the troubles of the day. And, oh boy, are there a lot of those I can see from this vantage point.

BUT, if I can lift my eyes, even just a bit, I can see beauty in the beyond. Beyond my circumstances. Beyond my setbacks. Beyond my troubles. Beyond my exhaustion. Beyond my disappointments.

It, apparently, is the lesson of my life. The lesson I must

continually learn.

If my view is only of my circumstances, they will overwhelm me.

If my view is of my Savior, He will overwhelm me.

I guess I have to decide what I want to be overwhelmed by ... been saying this forever. When am I going to get my rear in gear and live as I know I should?

Part of the problem is that I make choices that aren't great. I'm not talking about decisions—all those life decision I need to make—I'm talking about choices each day.

I choose to worry when I just need to wait.

I choose fear over faith.

I choose to seek comfort apart from God.

I choose to disobey, when I need to (I must) obey.

I choose to question instead of trust.

I choose the struggle instead of the peace.

I choose it all instead of Jesus.

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were formerly far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **For he is our peace**, who has made both groups one and has broken down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of the commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile both to God into one body through the cross, thereby slaying the enmity. **And he came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near**” (Eph. 2:13-17).

I choose the things of this world—the things right in front of

me—and somehow expect them to heal my broken heart, to fill the empty spaces, to comfort me completely.

They don't.

Nothing does, but Jesus.

I've said it before, but in some ways, I almost want to go back to the place when everything fell apart. When everything was truly out of my hands ... when all I could do was rely on God.

Since then I've been under the false impression that there are things in my control ... that some things need me ... that I can rely on myself ... good golly! That is so not true.

I no longer want to be in control of my life—it's too stressful. I want to let God have it all—so why don't I?

Because for some silly reason I continually think this little thing ... this thing before me ... this one thing I can handle. I can handle this thing. No worries.

Thanks God ... but I got this.

Ahhhh ... why do I insist on this silly way of living?

Does anyone else have this struggle? This insistence on self-reliance?

How do we win against it?

What's the secret?

Focus.

Focus? Is it really that simple?

Simple ... might not be the best word to use to describe anything in our lives. At least in mine.

Even focus is not simple. I'm a mess of focuses: kids, house, meals, schoolwork, classwork, homework, work work, teenagers, college student, college admission process, church, health, sleep, family, friends, car, stuff, and stuff, and stuff ...

I just want to focus on Jesus alone, but all the other things in life seem to edge into my vision.

"Therefore, since we are encompassed with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. **Let us look to Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2).

It sometimes feels that I can't really get my focus on Him alone because there is just so much to do—how in the world do I do it?

Maybe the problem isn't the focus point (Jesus) as much as what I think focusing means. What does focusing look like?

I usually envision it as something akin to prayer on my knees, Bible study, and time spent fellowshiping with others.

That can't be what focusing on Christ means because I can't stop everything else in my life to do that and that alone. We would be the most ragamuffin family ever ... not to mention we'd probably starve!

Alright, so what does it look like?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:4 came to mind: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

It made sense to me that that would be a way to focus—rejoicing, praying, thanking.

If I'm rejoicing, I must be focusing on Christ, who is my Savior.

If I'm praying, I must be focusing on Jesus, who is working in my life.

If I'm thanking, I must be focusing on Jesus, the source of all things in my life.

It just makes sense.

So maybe in some ways it is simple. It is simply living my life with my mind focused on who Christ is, what He has done and continues to do, and thanking Him for it all!

Good golly! We are brought back again to the gospel!

If our focus is on Christ, we cannot miss the gospel and its impact on our lives. We cannot lose our focus, because our lives are so covered by the gospel of grace.

Each day begins with the knowledge that I am saved, that I am blessed with another day to serve, that I am loved beyond measure, that I am forgiven, that I am precious to my God.

Each day continues with the sustaining strength of the Holy Spirit working in and through me to bless others. If I am praying and thanking Him throughout the day, I find myself more aware of how and where He is working. My focus is on what He is doing through me, rather than what I am doing for me.

Each day is covered with the grace of God. How can I begin to thank Him for that? How often do I just want to crawl into a corner and weep for my sinfulness? For the way I spoke to my child, the facial expressions I used, the anger I showed, for the thoughts I had that were unkind, the muttering and complaining that spilled from my mouth, the temptations I gave in to, the judgment, pride, and arrogance that invades my heart sometimes ... oh Lord, how is it possible you love me so much? I'm so very unlovable.

And yet, I AM so very loved.

Crazy.

Unexpected.

Amazing.

The view I'm taking right now ... and I pray it will continue into the next 5 minutes ... even into the next day!

Is the view of Jesus my Savior.

Jesus, who is my life.

Jesus, who is my peace.

Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of my faith.

Jesus.

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